

## CLAIMS

We claim:

1. A method for providing reward-based content, comprising:
  - downloading reward-based content having an embedded advertisement stream
  - 5 comprising at least one advertisement within the reward-based content;
  - playing the reward-based content;
  - detecting the beginning of the advertisement stream;
  - in response to detecting the beginning of the advertisement stream, disabling a remote control; and
  - 10 detecting the end of the advertisement stream.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of playing the reward-based content comprises playing the reward-base content on a personal video recorder.
- 15 3. The method of claim 2, further comprising:
  - recording the reward-based content as a stored recording on the personal video recorder; and
  - the step of playing the reward based-content on the personal video recorder
  - comprises playing the reward-based content from the stored recording on the personal
  - 20 video recorder.
4. The method of claim 2, wherein the step of disabling a remote control comprises disabling via a software command a remote control associated with the personal video recorder.
- 25 5. The method of claim 4, wherein the software command is transmitted from a transmission center.
6. The method of claim 2, further comprising:

determining that the entire advertisement stream was shown at a normal playback speed;

in response to determining that the entire advertisement stream was shown at a normal playback speed, continuing to play the reward-based content; and  
5 otherwise, terminating the reward-based content.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of detecting the beginning of the advertisement stream comprises locating embedded data placed within a non-visible portion of the advertising stream.

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8. The method of claim 7, wherein the embedded data comprises an indication that the reward-based content has ended.

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9. The method of claim 1, wherein the remote control is associated with a receiver.

10. The method of claim 6, further comprising:  
in response to determining that the entire advertisement stream was not shown at a normal playback speed, barring all further downloads of reward-based content for  
20 a period of time.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of detecting the beginning of the advertisement stream comprises locating embedded data transmitted as a dedicated data packet.

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12. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of detecting the beginning of the advertisement stream comprises locating embedded data contained within the vertical blanking interval of the advertisement stream.

13. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of detecting the beginning of the advertisement stream comprises locating embedded data contained within the horizontal overscan of the advertisement stream.

5 14. A method for detecting and replacing stale advertisements, comprising:  
detecting the beginning of a first advertisement contained in a programming signal;  
determining that the first advertisement is stale;  
in response to determining that the first advertisement is stale, requesting an  
10 updated advertisement;  
receiving the updated advertisement; and  
playing the updated advertisement.

15 15. The method of claim 14, wherein the step of playing the updated advertisement is performed substantially immediately after the step of detecting the beginning of a first advertisement contained in a programming signal.

16. The method of claim 14, further comprising embedding embedded data in a non-visible portion of the first advertisement.

20 17. The method of claim 16, wherein the step of detecting the beginning of a first advertisement contained in a programming signal comprises detecting the embedded data.

25 18. The method of claim 16, wherein the non-visible portion of the first advertisement comprises the vertical blanking interval.

19. The method of claim 16, wherein the non-visible portion of the first advertisement comprises the horizontal overscan.

20. The method of claim 17, wherein the embedded data comprises a time stamp indicating the last time at which the first advertisement is to be played.
21. The method of claim 20, wherein the step of requesting an updated 5 advertisement comprises requesting from a storage location an advertisement having a time stamp later than the current time.
22. The method of claim 14, further comprising transmitting embedded data as a separate data packet in the programming signal.
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23. The method of claim 21, wherein the storage location comprises a storage device located within a personal video recorder.
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24. The method of claim 21, further comprising:  
recording the programming signal on a storage device located within a personal video recorder; and  
wherein the step of playing a programming signal comprises playing the programming signal from the storage device.
- 20 25. A method for providing targeted advertising, comprising:  
compiling consumer profile information;  
determining whether a first advertisement matches the consumer profile information;  
in the event that the first advertisement matches the consumer profile 25 information, recording the first advertisement; and  
in the event that the first advertisement does not match the consumer profile information, ignoring the first advertisement.
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26. The method of claim 25, further comprising:  
determining whether the first advertisement is broadcast by a transmission center on a dedicated frequency;

in the event that the first advertisement is broadcast by the transmission center on the dedicated frequency, tuning a receiver to the dedicated frequency;

in response to tuning a receiver to the frequency, recording the first advertisement on a personal video recorder;

5 in the event that the first advertisement is not broadcast by the transmission center on the dedicated frequency, scanning a set of broadcast frequencies to locate the first advertisement; and

in response to locating the first advertisement, recording the first advertisement.

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27. The method of claim 26, further comprising:

playing a programming signal;

detecting a second advertisement having embedded data in the programming signal;

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determining whether the second advertisement matches the consumer information profile;

in response to determining that the second advertisement does not match the consumer information profile, retrieving the first advertisement;

inserting the first advertisement in the programming signal; and

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playing the first advertisement.

28. The method of claim 27, wherein the embedded data comprises information indicating the contents of the second advertisement.

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29. The method of claim 28, wherein the step of determining whether the second advertisement matches the consumer information profile comprises:

receiving the embedded data; and

comparing the contents of the second advertisement to the consumer information profile.

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30. The method of claim 27, wherein the step of determining whether the second advertisement matches the consumer information profile comprises comparing the embedded data to the consumer information profile.

5 31. The method of claim 27, wherein the step of determining whether the second advertisement matches the consumer information profile comprises reviewing the embedded data.

10 32. A method for providing an alternate display format for an advertisement during a fast-forwarding operation, comprising:

playing on a video device the advertisement having embedded data;  
detecting that the video device is replaying the advertisement at a playback speed exceeding a normal playback speed;  
in response to detecting that the video device is replaying the advertisement at a playback speed exceeding a normal playback speed, retrieving the embedded data;  
detecting the end of the advertisement; and  
in response to detecting the end of the advertisement, terminating retrieving the embedded data.

20 33. The method of claim 32, wherein the embedded data comprises a single video frame.

34. The method of claim 33, further comprising:

25 displaying the single video frame instead of the advertisement during the fast-forward operation;  
further in response to detecting the end of the advertisement, terminating displaying the single video frame.

30 35. The method of claim 32, wherein the embedded data comprises a plurality of storyboard frames.

36. The method of claim 35, further comprising:  
in response to retrieving the embedded data, displaying the plurality of storyboard frames; and  
further in response to detecting the end of the advertisement, terminating  
5 displaying the plurality of storyboard frames.

37. The method of claim 36, wherein the step of displaying the plurality of storyboard frames comprises:

10 retrieving a first portion of the embedded data;  
displaying a first storyboard frame corresponding to the first portion of the embedded data until the first portion of the embedded data is no longer retrieved;  
retrieving a second portion of the embedded data; and  
displaying a second storyboard frame corresponding to the second portion of the embedded data until the second embedded datum is no longer retrieved.  
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38. The method of claim 32, wherein the embedded data comprises audio data.

39. The method of claim 38, wherein the audio data is a song.

20 40. The method of claim 39, further comprising:  
playing the song;  
detecting the end of the advertisement; and  
terminating playing the song.

25 41. The method of claim 32, further comprising:  
detecting the end of the fast-forward operation; and  
in response to detecting the end of the fast-forward operation, terminating  
retrieving the embedded data.